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## MISCELLANEOUS.

### THE RECONCILIATION. OR, THE DREAM. A Story from Real Life. BY OLD NICHOLAS.

"Will you give me a penny, sir?" said a little ragged boy, as I passed the step of a door on which he was sitting. There was something so unbeggarly in the tone and manner of the suppliant, that I stopped.

"Yes," said I, and I took one from my pocket.

I looked the child in the face; there was a degree of intelligence that commanded attention; an expression, too, that for a moment I fancied I had seen before.

As I put the money into his hand I asked him where he lived.

"In a court over the bridge," he replied.

"With your mother?"

"Yes, sir, and father and sisters."

I beckoned him from the main street to learn more. In a few minutes I heard enough to determine me on accompanying him home.

We crossed Blackfriars' Bridge, and, after winding through several courts and alleys, on the Surrey side, and close by the river, we stopped at a small hovel, which appeared fit only for the abode of wretchedness and misery.

The child pushed the door open, and we entered. In the centre of the floor, upon what appeared to be the remains of a piece of matting, sat a young woman of apparently five or six and twenty. In her arms was an infant of very tender age; two or three little ones were huddled together in a corner, whose crying my appearance partially hushed.

Their mother raised her head from the baby as I approached her. I apologized for the liberty I had taken in intruding upon her sorrows. She answered not, but burst into tears. I offered her my arm to raise her from the floor, and looked round, but in vain, for a chair or stool—the walls were bare. She was too weak to stand. I stepped into the adjoining tenement—cottage I cannot call it,—and putting down half-a-crown on the table, begged the loan of an old chair, that was the only furniture of one side of the apartment.

When the poor creature was seated, I asked in what way I could best serve her.

"Oh, sir! she replied, 'food—food for my poor little ones!'

I gave the little fellow who had been my conductor, money, and bade him get some meat and bread. In an instant he was out of sight. I comforted as well as I was able the apparently dying woman; told her the accident that had brought me to her, and promised the little assistance that might be in my power. She would have spoken her thanks, but her strength was exhausted with the few words she had already uttered. The children, encouraged by the kind tone of voice in which I spoke, now one by one stole from their corner, and came round me. They would have been fine, healthy creatures, if misery had not marked them for her own; but the cheek was hollow, the eye sunken, the lip thin and livid. Hunger was fast consuming them. As I looked upon them my heart sank within me, and I could not drive back the tears that forced themselves into my eyes. They fell upon the forehead of the tallest of the group; she looked up, and seeing me weep, asked most piteously, "Are you hungry, sir, too?"

Poor child! with her, hunger had ever been associated with tears; the sight of them put the question into her mouth.

"No," said I; "I am not hungry; but you are, and shall soon be fed."

"And me?" "And me?"—And me?" exclaimed the others; their eyes glistening as they spoke.

"Yes, all of you!" I answered.

Some time had now elapsed, and my little messenger did not make his appearance. I grew impatient; for they needed more substantial comfort than words. I moved to the door to look for him. Taking a few steps up the court, I found him leaning against the wall, and crying bitterly; on seeing me he hid his face in his hands.

"What is the matter?" said I; "and where is the money I gave you?"

"Father saw me, and took it

away," sobbed he, "just as I was going into the baker's shop."

"Where is your father?" I asked.

"Over in the public-house, he continued, 'tipsy; and, because I cried, he beat me; and here the poor little fellow, putting down his hands, showed me his eye most frightfully cut."

My first impulse was to go over to the public-house; but, reflecting for an instant on the state of those I had just left, I immediately went myself and purchased such ready dressed food as I thought would suffice for a good meal; and then, having had the child's wound properly attended to, I returned to enjoy the luxury of seeing this starving family comparatively happy and comfortable.

When I took my departure I left what money I had about me, and promised to renew my visit before it should be exhausted.

It was my intention to have gone in a day or two; but the following circumstance prevented my doing so for a whole week.

On the next morning early I was sent for by an old gentleman with whom I was on terms of great intimacy, although our acquaintance was not of long standing. He was extremely ill, and wished to make a disposition of his property. I took a pen, and waited for his instructions.

"I give and bequeath," said the invalid, "all monies, houses, lands, and whatsoever else I may die possessed of, to the following, as if considering. Suddenly his countenance indicated a strong internal struggle, as if bitter recollections came upon him, which he was determined to discard. I put down my pen.

"Go on, sir! go on!" said he, hurriedly. "To—Henry Masters—"

I started with astonishment. It was the name of the man who had been my conductor.

"You cannot mean this, sir!" said I. "I have no claim upon you to such an extent."

"To Henry Masters," he repeated slowly and distinctly.

I approached his pillow. "My dear friend, I have heard that you have a child. Ought not—"

He put his hand upon my arm. "Child! Oh, yes! I know it; but I had forgotten it until this hour. For years I have forgotten it! Why think of it now? I will not think of it!" he exclaimed violently; then falling back, and exerting extraordinary self-control, he again repeated more decisively than before, "to Henry Masters."

I could not bear to write down words that would send out a child forever without another effort: I commenced in a persuasive manner; but he instantly interrupted me; and his look and tone I shall not readily forget.

"Sir," said he, "I made up my mind on the most important part of this matter years ago, when I had health, and strength, and intellect about me. It is not honest to try and make me waver now that I am an imbecile old man."

I could say no more. He again repeated his instructions, and I reluctantly obeyed them.

For some days I was his constant attendant; indeed I scarcely ever left his bedside. Occasionally his mind wandered, and then his mutterings—for they were little better—had evidently connection with his last rational conversation—the disposition of his property. Bitter exclamations about his child—his daughter, plainly showed that, though disowned, she was not, and could not be forgotten. Once or twice he became calm and perfectly collected, and on each opportunity I endeavored to bring him to a reconsideration of the step he had taken; but in vain. It was the only subject upon which he would not hear me. I learned from the physician in attendance that his recovery was perfectly hopeless; but that he might linger some little time. I longed to see my poor dependants again, and one morning when my patient had fallen into a deep slumber, I took my hat, and, quietly stealing from the chamber, directed my footsteps to their abode. The family were in a state little better than when I first saw them. The woman's husband, a reckless and inveterate drunkard, judging from the food he found at home that from some quarter or other, assistance had been given, forced the fact from

his trembling partner, and then nearly the whole of the little money I had left behind; since which violence he had not returned. Again I supplied the poor creatures with refreshment, and attempted to soothe the only one whom food could not alone satisfy—the heartbroken mother.

She briefly told me her story. It was indeed a piteous one.

She was well connected; and, at the time of her marriage, living with her parents in comfort and affluence in New York. They wished her to connect herself with a man with whom she felt she never could be happy, and she refused. She was secretly plighted to another,—secretly, for he was forbidden even her father's house! Her father commanded, her mother persuaded; but it was in vain. Her's was a passion that neither threat nor argument could weaken. She married, and was renounced, they told her, forever! She turned to the chosen of her heart; and, though the daughter wept, the wife triumphed! But alas! she leant upon a broken reed. Her love had glossed over faults—nay, vices—which calmer judges had detected, and she had fancied perfection where all was frail. Her husband cruelly neglected her; she was a married widow! Children came about her; they were fatherless! Her mother tenderly loved her, and this wretchedness broke her heart! Her father was of sterner stuff. In the loss of his own partner, he said, a murder had been committed, and he doubly steeled himself against its unnatural author.

Then it was that in utter despair she left her country, long urged to the step by her husband, who said he could get employment here; and who solemnly promised that in a new land she would find a better fate.

That, once removed from his haunts of ruin and dissipation, he would forsake them for ever, and strive to keep holy that sacred vow which bound him to 'foreake all others, and cling only unto her.'

On his arrival in England he succeeded in obtaining a lucrative situation, and for a brief period all was well; but soon the demon, Drunkenness, again had hold upon him, and he was lost forever.

Friendless, and alone, she struggled against the stream of adversity; her health and strength soon failed her, and she fell into utter destitution,—in utter destitution I had indeed found her!

This was a slight outline of her sad history. At its conclusion she burst into a violent paroxysm of tears. In such moments words of consolation are but caustics, keeping open wounds they cannot cure: I attempted them not. The violence of this fit had in some degree exhausted itself, and I was about to speak of doing something for her children, when a knocking at the door, accompanied by several voices talking in a suppressed tone, made me start from my seat. I undid the latch, and three men entered, bearing in their arms a fourth in a senseless state.

They laid their burden on the floor with but little ceremony, and the little fellow whom I had first seen, desired the man to drive to Mortimer street. It was the residence of my dying friend. Showing the mother and her child into a room below, I hurried up stairs to his bed chamber. I had already been absent several hours longer than I had intended. When I drew aside the curtain, the old man turned his eyes towards me; they were deep, sunken and glassy; his features angular and emaciated as they had been, were now perfectly ghastly. I was painfully struck with the advances which death had made towards his victim.

My friend looked steadfastly at me for some minutes without any token or sign of recognition. I spoke, and my voice aiding perhaps his failing memory, called me to his recollection. He grasped my hand with a convulsive force, so great that his bony fingers actually gave me pain.

"I thought," said he striving, but ineffectually to raise himself in bed, "that you had neglected—left me, left me in my last trial. Sit down and come close to me. I have had a sleep—a long, long sleep, and a dream so horrible, so real, that waking, though it

frightfully distorted; his lips lived and frothy.

"Look at me!" she continued, pressing his hand; "look at me!" and she spoke with a winning affection of tone and manner, that the consciousness could not have withstood; but his ears were sealed, and his eyes full and fixed.

A surgeon now came in; he looked at him, and, having made some inquiries as to the length of time he had been in the state he saw, at once pronounced his fears for the very worst. He immediately bled him in the arm, and as quickly as possible cupped him freely in the neck. During the latter operation his patient showed for an instant some signs of returning feeling, and this, by the look with which he gazed upon his agonised wife. To attempt to describe that look would be attempting that to which no language is equal. I think no pencil could have ever done it, much less a pen. It was one which told that the vision of his past life, concentrated, flashed suddenly before him; a life during which she who was his ministering angel had been a victim to cruelty and neglect; there was an intensity of gaze, too, as he felt that he was looking his last. It was a lingering spark of affection struggling into light through the dark horrors of remorse. Again and again she breathed comfort and reconciliation into his ear. I know not whether her words reached his heart. I fear that with the exception of that one momentary gleam of reality, there was a prostration of power and intellect which denied him such a blessing. I need not, will not go fuller into detail. He died the same afternoon, some few hours after he had been brought home.

I hired a person to perform the duties of a nurse, and to remain with the corpse until I could give orders for its interment.

The widow and children I resolved to place with a relative of my own until the funeral should have taken place. I did so. Before taking leave, I begged the heart broken woman to tell me her family name, that I might write to her friends in America on her behalf.

"Friends," said she, "I have none. My mother was my only friend, and she is gone!"

"But you have a father?" said I.

"I know not she continued; 'I have not known for years. Most likely he is gone too!'

"At any rate I will write—"

"Not to America," she replied; "for when my poor mother died he left it, I know never to return."

"And his name?" said I, leading her to the point upon which I wished information. "His name was—"

"Jackson said the mourner.

Why did I start at this single word? Why did my words hurry rapidly on another as I questioned her as to the Christian name? and why, when I learnt it was Adam—Adam Jackson—did my frame tremble, my countenance change its hue, my heart beat audibly? "Oh, God!" said I, inwardly, "if it should be so!"

I sent for a coach; and, handing in my still weeping companion, and the little fellow whom I had first seen, desired the man to drive to Mortimer street. It was the residence of my dying friend. Showing the mother and her child into a room below, I hurried up stairs to his bed chamber. I had already been absent several hours longer than I had intended. When I drew aside the curtain, the old man turned his eyes towards me; they were deep, sunken and glassy; his features angular and emaciated as they had been, were now perfectly ghastly. I was painfully struck with the advances which death had made towards his victim.

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was to die in happiness! Come closer," he continued, "and I will tell you all. I thought that I saw my long departed wife; she came to me in sorrow, for our lost, discarded daughter was on her arm. She strove to speak, but could not; again and again she strove but bitter grief choked her utterance. She took our child by the hand, and led her towards me; but I turned from them. The patient fell at my feet, I spurned her away. I steeled my heart; but could not close my ears to her supplications. They were the outpourings of a contrite heart; but they touched me not. She spoke in anguish of her little ones—her helpless little ones! and I laughed, at her misery. Still she prayed on; she bathed my feet with tears; she lifted her hands, and would have touched me, but I shrunk from her advances, and heartlessly commanded her to be gone! Her voice was suddenly stilled: I heard no sob, no sigh! I listened; but could not even detect the heavy breathings of sorrow. For an instant I remained wrapped in gloomy and unrelenting anger. I turned to gratify once more the devil that was in me: but she was gone! I sought for and called aloud upon my wife; but she too had departed!"

There the old man paused; then placing his hand upon my shoulder, so as to bring my half-averted face towards him, "You tremble," said he, "you tremble and turn pale!"

It was so; in spite of every effort to appear composed I could not command my feelings. I was about to speak. He put his finger on his lips as enjoining silence, and continued,

"You are already affected; you will shudder when you have heard me out. I thought that immediately on being left alone I was seized with an icy chilliness, which I never turned conscious of, I grew more alarmed, lest when he did recover it might be but for a moment, as I knew to be a not unfrequent case, and that I might have no time to enquire into the striking coincidence, to say the least of it, that had so extraordinarily presented itself to me. With this fear upon my mind, I determined at once upon hurrying down stairs and satisfying myself in a more direct way than I had at first intended.

When I entered the room in which I had left the widow and her child, I found the former sitting on the sofa, her face buried in her hands—the boy was at her feet. As I approached she looked up; immediately on perceiving me she exclaimed, and her voice trembled with grief and agitation, "For God's sake, sir! where am I? Whose house is this? then seized a book from the table, she continued, 'this book was my father's! it was his own Bible! Here is his name, written years past by my own hand.' And turning to the first page, on which was inscribed 'Adam Jackson, New York,' she held it to my eyes, standing motionless as a statue.

Confirmed thus suddenly in the suspicion that had crossed my mind on first hearing her history and name, I was so bewildered, that I knew not what reply to make. I feared to tell her at once that she was under her father's roof; that the same walls inclosed them, lest, in her debilitated state, it might prove too much; I could not be evasive, for her whole being seemed to hang on the explanation she waited for.

Tortured by my silence, she seized my wrist violently and repeated in a loud and menacing tone, while her wild and haggard look betokened incipient madness, "Whose house is this?"

"It is the house," said I mildly, "of Adam Jackson."

"My father!" she shrieked hysterically, and fell senseless at my feet.

After considerable difficulty I restored her to comparative calmness; I was then compelled to explain to her the situation of her parent without disguise, for at first, she impatiently insisted on seeing him. After this, she assured me she would be governed by my wishes. I led her to the sick chamber. As we entered I pointed to a chair by the bed-side, and she turned towards it. The slight noise we made disturbed the old man, and in a faint voice he called me by name. I carefully placed myself between him and his child.

"My dear, dear friend!" he began, "I have been some time dying, but I feel the struggle is nearly over."

At the sound of her father's voice, the trembling creature by my side sprang from her seat—she would have rushed into his arms—the curtain was between them, and he was slightly turned from her, so that the movement was unseen; with one hand I forcibly restrained her.

countless herd as wretched as myself. A cloud passed over us; our souls sank within us; it shut us out forever from even the glimmerings of hope. I thought we fell, deeper, and yet deeper, and yet deeper, gathering in numbers as we fell! Groans and blasphemies were in my ear; impenetrable darkness above and hell below! I shrieked madly? I was answered but by shrieks? A thousand times I grasped at objects to stay my fall: I clutched them, but they yielded, and helped me not! Hopeless and eternal perdition was before me! One plunge more, and a lake whose waves were fire—fire indistinguishable, would engulf me forever! Myriad beheld it too; and one universal scream of horror, enough to rend twenty worlds, burst upon me!"

Here the old man was so excited with the recital of these imaginary horrors, that I could with difficulty hold him in my arms. His frame quivered, his eye glared with unnatural power and brightness. I spoke and soothed him.

"The sound is now in my ears!" he exclaimed wildly. Almost instantly after, he added, as calmly, "I awoke! I am awake!" and clasping his withered hands together, and raising his eyes to heaven, he said fervently, "I thank thee God! it was a dream!"

Almost immediately afterwards he fell back on his pillow, perfectly exhausted. Anxious as I was to speak to him once more, to ask him but one question—to satisfy my more than surmises, I could not dare not do it, as he then was, I watched, oh! how eagerly, to see his eyes open, his lips move, that I might address myself to him, but he lay in a state of complete stupor: I trembled as I gazed, lest he might never move again. After some little time, indeed, he opened his eyes, and a rattling in his throat,

then in a piercing voice, which seemed to have struggled with and for an instant escaped the power that was about to silence it forever he exclaimed, "This is no dream! it is my Ruth!—my daughter!" and flinging open his arms, she, thus startled from her trance, sprang forward and fell on his bosom.

Within a few minutes after this touching scene, I was called to the chamber; I found it was the physician; I took him aside and hurriedly explained to him the events of the last few hours. We then approached the bed; the old man was dead his arms were extended across his child, whose face was buried in the pillow. On raising her up, a stream of blood rushed from her mouth; a vessel had been ruptured! In less than half an hour her spirit, too, had departed.

SAGACITY OF A DOG.—The following instance is related by the Edinburgh Weekly Register:

"The animal belonged to a celebrated chemist, who tried upon it the effect of a certain poison, and upon the next day administered a counter poison, with the effort of preserving the creature's life. The next day another dose was offered him, but he would not touch it. Different sorts of poisonous drugs were presented to him, but he resolutely refused all. Bread was offered, but he would not touch it; meat, but he turned from it; water, but he would not drink. To reassure him, his master offered him bread and meat of which he himself ate in the dog's presence; and of that the sagacious animal hesitated not to partake. He was taken to a fountain, but he would not drink nowhere but from the spot where the water gushed free and fresh. This continued for several days, until the master, touched by the extraordinary intelligence of the poor creature, resolved to make no more attempts upon him with his poisons. The dog is very gay and very happy, but will eat nothing that he does not first see his master touch, nor will he drink except from the purest spot of the fountain."

HOMELY DEFINITIONS.—By a Bachelor.—Home—the place where children have their own way, and where married men resort when they have nowhere else to keep themselves. Wife—the woman that is expected to purchase without means, and sew on buttons before they come off. Baby; a thing on account of which its mother could never go to the Opera, consequently never have a new hat. Dinner; the meal which is expected to be in exact readiness whenever the master of the house happens to be at home to eat, whether at 12 or half past 3 o'clock. Washing day; the time when a woman can throw a broom at a thiefish dog, or say, "I won't," without being thought cross. Trousers; the disputed territory.

She sank down, but a half-suppressed and choking sob, that might have broken her heart, escaped her.

"Do not grieve," said he, affectionately pressing my hand, "rather join me in thankful prayer to the Almighty that I have lived thus long—long enough to renounce as I now do the deadly sin unrelenting against a fellow creature; a sin which I madly hugged even to the brink of the grave!"

"Do you understand me?" he continued, speaking with difficulty. My child! God—God bless! as I forgive her!"

Had I wished to have delayed longer the meeting between father and child, I could not have done it. With the greatest difficulty I had, up to this moment, restrained the racking impatience of the latter, until I could discover whether or not the old man's dream had effected what I had failed in. Now that it was obvious that it had done so, I drew aside the curtain.

On beholding the emaciated form of him from whom she had been so long parted, and who, but a few hours before, she had never thought to behold again, she stood horror-stricken, paralysed by the conflicting feelings that rushed upon her. Her eyes were tearless, and all sounds of sorrow hushed; with hands clasped, her head bent forward, her features fixed, her form rigid and apparently breathless, she seemed a statue of despair rather than a thing of life. I trembled for the consequences when she should speak, or he direct his looks towards her. Never, never shall I forget the agony of that moment!

He moved! He turned as if again to address me. She, whom with his dying breath he had just blessed, and who was probably at that awful moment the sole object of his thoughts, stood in life, if such indeed it might be called, beside him! His half-closed eyes rested upon her! The pupil dilated,—he gazed fixedly, but wildly; he struggled to raise himself! I supported him in the attempt. Once or twice he started, and a rattling in his throat,